Listing of Claims:

1-42. (Canceled)

43. (Currently amended) A mailpiece feeder assembly comprising:

a lifting mechanism adapted to selectively lift a mailpiece from a stack of mailpieces, wherein the lifting mechanism reciprocates in a first direction between an engagement position wherein the lifting mechanism engages the mailpiece, and a lifted position wherein the lifting mechanism completely separates the mailpiece from the stack of mailpieces; and

a gripping mechanism adapted to selectively remove the mailpiece from the lifting mechanism and move the mailpiece to a desired location, wherein the gripping mechanism reciprocates, in a second direction generally perpendicular to the first direction, between a mailpiece grasping location central of the lifting mechanism, wherein the gripping mechanism [[jaw]] closes around the mailpiece and removes the mailpiece from the lifting mechanism, a mailpiece release location wherein the gripping mechanism [[jaw]] is open and releases the mailpiece to the desired location, and a home location.

44. (Currently amended) A mailpiece feeder assembly comprising:

a lifting mechanism adapted to selectively lift a mailpiece from a stack of mailpieces, wherein the lifting mechanism reciprocates in a first direction between an engagement position wherein the lifting mechanism engages the mailpiece, and a lifted position wherein the lifting mechanism completely separates the mailpiece from the stack of mailpieces;

a gripping mechanism adapted to selectively remove the mailpiece from the lifting mechanism and move the mailpiece to a desired location, wherein the gripping mechanism reciprocates, in a second direction generally perpendicular to the first direction, between a mailpiece grasping location wherein the gripping mechanism closes around the mailpiece and removes the mailpiece from the lifting mechanism, a mailpiece release location wherein the gripping mechanism is open and releases the mailpiece to the desired location, and a home location; and

~~The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 43, further comprising~~ a plurality of sensors for controlling the lifting mechanism and a plurality of sensors for controlling the gripping mechanism.

45. (Currently amended) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 43, wherein the lifting mechanism comprises at least one suction [[cup]] element and at least two separator elements.

46. (Currently amended) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 45, wherein the at least two separator elements impart a generally convex distortion to the mailpiece being lifted by the lifting mechanism ~~lifting mechanism further includes a separator element to assist in separating the mailpiece from the stack as the mailpiece is lifted from the stack~~.

47. (Previously presented) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 43, wherein the gripping mechanism comprises a jaw, the jaw being selectively moveable between an open and closed position.

48. (Currently amended) A mailpiece feeder assembly comprising:

a lifting mechanism adapted to selectively lift a mailpiece from a stack of mailpieces, wherein the lifting mechanism reciprocates in a first direction between an engagement position wherein the lifting mechanism engages the mailpiece, and a lifted position wherein the lifting mechanism separates the mailpiece from the stack of mailpieces;

a gripping mechanism adapted to selectively remove the mailpiece from the lifting mechanism and move the mailpiece to a desired location, wherein the gripping mechanism reciprocates, in a second direction generally perpendicular to the first direction, between a mailpiece grasping location wherein the gripping mechanism closes around the mailpiece and removes the mailpiece from the lifting mechanism, and a mailpiece release location wherein the gripping mechanism is open and releases the mailpiece to the desired location;

~~The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 43, further comprising:~~

at least one platform adapted to support the stack of mailpieces and advance the stack of mailpieces in the first direction to a desired position proximate the lifting mechanism; and

a drive assembly for driving the at least one platform.

49. (Previously presented) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 48, further comprising a sensor for determining when the stack of mailpieces has reached the desired position.

50. (Previously presented) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 48, wherein the at least one platform is selectively re-positionable along a path of the drive assembly.

51. (Currently amended) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 50, further comprising a guide member proximate the drive assembly, wherein the at least one platform is slidably mounted to the [[a]] guide member.

52. (Previously presented) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 50, wherein the at least one platform includes an engagement element for selectively coupling the at least one platform to the drive assembly.

53. (Previously presented) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 52, wherein the drive assembly includes a drive belt having a plurality of notches, and wherein the engagement element is selectively engaged in at least one of the plurality of notches in the drive belt.

54. (Previously presented) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 48, wherein the at least one platform includes a first platform and a second platform cooperating to sequentially move a plurality of stacks of mailpieces to the desired position.

55. (Previously presented) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 54, wherein the first platform supports a first stack of mailpieces and the second platform supports a second stack of mailpieces, and wherein the first platform is removable from the first stack of mailpieces such that the first stack of mailpieces and the second stack of mailpieces become a combined stack of mailpieces, and the first platform is repositionable relative to the second platform to receive a subsequent stack of mailpieces.

56. (Currently amended) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 46, wherein the at least two separator elements are ~~element is~~ positionable between at least a first set position and a second set position to impart varying degrees of distortion to the mailpiece being lifted by the lifting mechanism.

57. (Currently amended) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 44, wherein one of the plurality of sensors for controlling the lifting mechanism is a lifting mechanism extended sensor for sensing when the lifting mechanism is in the engagement position.

58. (Currently amended) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 44, wherein one of the plurality of sensors for controlling the lifting mechanism is a lifting mechanism retracted sensor for sensing when the lifting mechanism is in the lifted position.

59. (Currently amended) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 44, wherein one of the plurality of sensors for controlling the gripping mechanism is a gripping mechanism extended sensor for sensing when the gripping mechanism is in the mailpiece grasping location and for signaling to the gripping mechanism to grasp the mailpiece from the lifting mechanism.

60. (Currently amended) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 44, wherein one of the plurality of sensors for controlling the gripping mechanism is a gripping mechanism release sensor for sensing when the gripping mechanism is proximate the mailpiece release location and for signaling to the gripper mechanism to release the mailpiece.

61. (Currently amended) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 44, wherein one of the plurality of sensors for controlling the gripping mechanism is a gripping mechanism retracted sensor for sensing when the gripping mechanism is in the home location and for signaling to the feeder assembly that the gripping mechanism is ready to start a new feed cycle.

62. (Previously presented) The mailpiece feeder assembly of Claim 47, wherein the jaw includes a sensor for sensing that a mailpiece is within the jaw.